

No. 40006.
his Friend & Superior. Me!

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Eulogy

ON THE LIFE OF

General Washington.



E U L O G Y

ON THE LIFE OF

General George Washington,

Who died at Mount Vernon, December 14th, 1799, in the 68th
year of his age.

WRITTEN

At the request of the citizens of Newburyport, and delivered at
the first Presbyterian Meeting-House in that town,
January 2nd. 1800.

By THOMAS PAINE, A. M.

“ Oh ! for a muse of fire, that would ascend
“ The brightest heaven of invention !
“ An empire for a stage, heroes to act,
“ And angels to behold the swelling scene !
“ Then should the MIGHTY SHADE again assume
“ His local habitation, and his name,
“ Mantling our sphere with his supernal glory !
“ Virtue and Fame should pioneer his way
“ Thro’ planets wonder-struck ; while at his heels
“ Valor and Victory (leasht in like hounds)
“ Crouch for employment !”

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Americans,

THE Saviour of your country has obtained his last victory. Having reached the summit of human perfection, he has quitted the region of human glory. CONQUEROR OF TIME, he has triumphed over mortality ; LEGATE OF HEAVEN, he has returned with the tidings of his mission ; FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, he has ascended to advocate their cause in the bosom of his God. Solemn, "as it were a pause in nature," was his transit to eternity ;—thronged by the shades of heroes, his approach to the confines of bliss ;—pæned by the song of angels, his journey beyond the stars !

THE voice of a grateful and afflicted people has pronounced the eulogium of their departed hero—" *first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.*" That this exalted tribute is justly due to his memory, the scar-honored veteran, who has fought under the banners of his glory, the enraptured statesman, who has bowed to the dominion of his eloquence, the hardy cultivator, whose soil has been defended by the prodigies of his valor, the protect-

ed citizen, whose peaceful rights have been secured by the vigilance of his wisdom ; yea, every fibre, that can vibrate in the heart of an American, will attest with agonized sensibility.

BORN to direct the destiny of empires, his character was as majestic, as the events, to which it was attached, were illustrious. In the delineation of its features, the vivid pencil of Genius cannot brighten a trait, nor the blighting breath of Calumny obscure. His principles were the result of organic philosophy, his success of moral justice. His integrity assumed the port of command, his intelligence the aspect of inspiration. Glory, to *many* impregnable, he obtained without ambition ;—popularity, to *all* inconstant, he enjoyed without jealousy. The one was his from admiration, the other from gratitude. The former embellished, but could not reward ; the latter followed, but never could lead him. The robust vigor of his virtue, like the undazzled eye of the Eagle, was inaccessible to human weakness ; and the unaspiring temperament of his passions, like the regenerating ashes of the Phoenix, gave new life to the greatness it could not extinguish. In the imperial dignity of his person, was exhibited the august stature of his mind :

* See

" See what a grace was seated on his brow,
" An eye like Mars, the front of Jove himself,
" A combination, and a form indeed,
" Where every God did seem to set his seal,
" To give the world assurance of a man !"*

OPPRESSED by the disconsolate sensibilities, which this melancholy occasion has excited, yet inspired by a veneration, which no sense of calamity can suspend, how shall the feeble eulogist of the moment retrace the path of the hero through the rugged acclivities of his fame,—how shadow the outlines of a life, whose influence on society has baffled the imitation of the wise,—how define the great proportions of a character, which, like the electric principle, can only be described by its effects? What wing of human description shall soar to the unclouded height of his talents, what chemistry of human judgment shall separate the elements of his virtues?—The magnificence of his deeds has outvied the heraldry of fancy—and the purity of his motives has bewildered the deductions of reason.

FROM his first appearance on the theatre of public life, ere the modest simplicity of enterprize had invited the decorations of artificial honor, ere the "hair-breadth escapes"

* Shakespear.

escapes" of the *Monongehala* had elicited the native energies of heroism, to the maturest era of his excellence, when victory had nothing left to bestow, and Fame herself had despaired of rendering to his merits their equivalent reward, we behold the same undeviating course of magnanimous action, rising, like the sun, in gradual and majestic progression. In no situation, to which the emergencies of his country have called him, however insulated with peril, or fortified by prosperity, do we at any time detect his invincible equanimity, modified by incident. In no climax of fortune, do we behold him, dejected by obstacle, or elevated by success;—desperate in danger, or sanguine in triumph. Deliberate to concert, he was vigorous to execute;—intrepid to conquer, he was humane to forgive. In council, he united the calculations of the veteran, to the ruling impulse of the patriot:—in battle, he never shed the blood of an enemy but for victory, nor gained a victory but for his country.

As the director of that important and dubious contest, which issued in the establishment of our liberty and independence, he displayed an impressive grandeur of exertion, which marshalled into hostility the fluctuating vigor of his countrymen, and is still remembered with awe in the

the astonishment of nations. To the rapacious cabinet of the mother country, which had recently learnt, in the disastrous campaign of BRADDOCK, that her glory was mortal, he had given his name a formidable estimation by his military prowess on that memorable occasion. In the enjoyment of an ample paternal domain, he was reposing under the groves of fame and philosophy, when the chafed lion of New-England "leaped on the daring huntsman, that had galled him," and boldly bade defiance to his power. The dawn of our revolution was overshadowed with clouds, that would have damped the ardor of any people, whose bosoms were not inspired by the uncontrollable enthusiasm of liberty. But what hope of success could this high-born principle, though stimulated by injury, afford to the unwarlike peasantry of a country, without arms, without discipline, without funds, without a leader, in contending with an empire, whose policy and valor had for centuries kept the nations of Europe in its toils? Yet, at this inauspicious juncture, when every prospect was enveloped with disaster, when unsuccessful opposition could promise no reward but aggravated oppression, when political infidelity had almost chilled with dismay the kindling fervor of Americans;—at this moment, so portentous, so gloomy, did the calm, inflexible, unassimilating WASHINGTON,

relinquish without reluctance the magnificent retirement of wealth and honor; and, committing to the hazard of the contest, the pleasures, that allured him to seclusion, and the character, that attached him to life, appealed to the God of armies to attest a soldier's oath—" *I will triumph, or die with my countrymen !*" —Animated by his guiding intelligence, America awoke to the consciousness of her powers; and, realising the boast of the Roman hero, an army, organized by his creative discipline, arose at his command.

THROUGH the vicissitudes of a war, singularly fluctuating in its fortunes, and desolating in its effects, he discovered a constant principle of action, which acquired no lustre from the brilliant exploits it achieved, but derived all its glory from its own original greatness. Self-dependent, and self-elevated, it disdained the fictitious aid of circumstance; and never did it shine with more splendor and energy, than when fortune had deserted him, and his country had despaired. The activity of a fortitude, whose stability was reason, invigorated the operations of an intellect, whose object was liberty. What but this invincible constitution of soul, whose gigantic philosophy always rose with the difficulties it encountered, could have sustained

sustained the drooping cause of an half-conquered people, at that momentous and almost hopeless crisis, when the banks of the Delaware were lined by a triumphant enemy, impatient for our subjugation ; when the ranks of our brave defenders, thinned by battle, by famine and retreat, crimsoned their flying encampments with the blood of their footsteps; when the fate of a continent was suspended on the incredible exertions of a night, and a conspiracy of the elements opposed the progress of the eventful enterprize ! The mind, that was inaccessible to despair, was invulnerable to disaster ; and at the instant, when the fangs of our Invader were unclutched to fasten on his prey, when his pampered ambition was gloating on the spoils of unconditional submission, the distant thunder of the cannon at *Trenton* aroused him from his dreams of dominion, and convinced him that the resources of a WASHINGTON were not to be computed by the extent of his entrenchments, nor his activity to be palliated by a campaign of disasters.

To the pen of the historian must be resigned the more arduous and elaborate tribute of justice to those efforts of heroic and political virtue, which conducted the American people to peace and liberty.—The vanquished foe retired from our respiring shores, and left to the CONTROL-

ING GENIUS, who repelled them, the gratitude of his own country, and the admiration of the world. The time had now arrived, which was to apply the touchstone to his integrity,—which was to assay the affinity of his principles to the standard of immutable right. Enjoying the unbounded confidence of an emancipated people, whose filial reverence had associated in his character, a greatness, unexamined by patriotism, with a purity, unfurled by suspicion,—and commanding the implicit affections of an army of veterans, whose unliquidated demands, on the justice of an impoverished public, might have rendered them zealous instruments of ambition,—the deliverer of his country was now the arbiter of its fate. It was now the flood-tide of his glory, on which he had only to embark, and the current would have wafted him to his haven. That decisive moment in the existence of nations and men, on which the destinies of both are suspended, was now sitting on the dial's point of the crisis.—On the one hand, a realm, to which he was endeared by his services, almost invited him to empire : on the other, the liberty, to whose protection his life had been devoted, was the ornament and boon of human nature. —WASHINGTON could not depart from his own great self. His country was free ;—he was no longer a general ! Sublime spectacle ! more elevating to the pride of virtue, than
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the sovereignty of the globe united to the sceptre of ages ! Enthroned in the hearts of his countrymen, the gorgeous pageantry of prerogative was unworthy the majesty of his dominion. That effulgence of military character, which in ancient states has blasted the rights of the people, whose renown it had brightened, was not *here* permitted, by the hero, from whom it emanated, to shine with so destructive a lustre. Its beams, though intensely resplendent, did not wither the young blossoms of our independence ; and liberty, like the *burning bush*, flourished unconsumed by the glory, which surrounded it.

To the illustrious founder of our republic was it reserved, to exhibit the example of a magnanimity, that commanded victory—of a moderation, that retired from triumph. Unlike the erratic meteors of ambition, whose flaming path sheds a disastrous light on the pages of history, his bright orb, eclipsing the luminaries, among which it rolled, never portended “ fearful change” to religion, nor from its “ golden tresses” shook pestilence on empire. What to *other* heroes has been glory, would to *him* have been disgrace. To *his* intrepidity it would have added no honorary trophy, to have waded, like the conqueror of *Peru*, through the blood of credulous millions, to plant the standard

standard of triumph at the burning mouth of a volcano ! To *his* fame it would have erected no auxiliary monument, to have invaded, like the ravager of *Egypt*, an innocent, though barbarous nation, to inscribe his name on the pillar of *Pompey* !

SELF, the grand hinge, on which revolve the principles and passions, that have swelled the obituary of nations, made not an unit in the calculations of a mind, which considered grandeur as the inseparable incident of rectitude ;—which owed to fortune nothing of its glory, to enthusiasm nothing of its virtue. From “heaven’s high chancery” had issued his commission ;—he obeyed the godlike precept it contained ;—he created a nation ! The glorious work completed, so was his ambition. The reward of his labors was the enjoyment of that liberty he had protected from violation ; and the boast of his pride was the cultivation of that soil he had defended from subjection. Amid the fondest careffes of fame, that pursued him to retirement,—blush ye heroic murderers of mankind !—never did the transcendent WASHINGTON, on the pinnacle of his greatness, deign to be conscious, that by *his* talents his country was free,—that in *her* glory himself was immortal !

PUBLIC

PUBLIC opinion has in all ages been as volatile as the air, that wafts it ;—and the fate, which has attended the benefactors of their country, has been as chequered as the passions, and perverse as the ingratitude of man. A tyrant, fainted by the people he had enslaved, has been elevated to a niche in the Pantheon ; while a hero, whose talents and services had propped a falling empire, has found at last a more faithful friend in the mastiff that conducted him, than in the nation he had protected. But it has been the peculiar lot of a WASHINGTON, to unite to an integrity, which could impeach the ambition of malice, the vigilance of an enterprize, which could arrest the decisions of fortune. Through the long labors of a life, which forms an epoch in history, never for a moment was he rivalled in the affections of his countrymen ; and to the honor of Americans, be it recorded, that their gratitude to the man, who had established their independence, existed, at the period of impending anarchy, the only cementing bond of union, which preserved their jarring interests from a destructive collision.

THE temporary structure of the old confederation, which had been planned merely for the purposes of a revolutionary government, when the passions of the people were united,

united, was found, upon a brief experiment, to be totally incompetent to direct the affairs of an extending nation, when peace had restored the complicated occupations of life, and demanded a more uniform protection from the energies of law. The inconveniences, resulting from its defects, had given occasion to designing demagogues, who hoped to profit by a separation of the states, to foment divisions among a people, who too lightly valued the blessings they enjoyed. The union of the country was in danger ; and the evil was of too baneful a nature to admit of a partial or dilatory remedy. But, how novel, how aspiring, was the hope of connecting, under one compact code of general jurisprudence, so many distinct sovereignties, each jealous of its independence, without impairing their respective authorities ! The unbalanced bodies of the confederacy had almost overcome the attracting power, that restrained them ; when the watchful guardian of his country's interests, the heart-uniting WASHINGTON appeared, the political magnet in the center of discord, and reconciled and consolidated the clashing particles of the system in an indissoluble union of government.

POSSESSING, as well from experience, as intuition, the master science, that could direct the impulses of human action—

action;—and invested, by the crowded benefactions of a life of glory, with a charm of eloquence, which impressed the convictions of reason on the pliant gratitude of his countrymen;—he ruled in the councils of that august body of statesmen and patriots, the fruit of whose cooperating talents was the present constitution of America. By the unanimous suffrage of an enlightened and confiding people, appointed to the administration of a government, in whose construction he had exerted so beneficial an influence, he brought, to the execution of that important and arduous trust, the energy of a mind, whose elevation could borrow no dignity from station, and the integrity of a heart, whose sensibility could receive no bias but from his country. With what wisdom and vigor he discharged the hazardous and thronging duties of an incipient magistracy, the revival of political harmony, the extended confidence of commerce, the unexampled encrease of national credit and wealth, and the happiness and morality of the people, will furnish a more satisfactory evidence, than the most brilliant description of the panegyrist. In this unprecedented transition of office, his character had assumed a new and astonishing attitude;—the impenetrable hardywood of the conqueror was rivalled by the intelligent policy of the statesman. Pierced by the glance of his administration, PARTY, like the recreant

eye of the felon, shrunk abashed from his scrutiny ;—and unnerved by the sanctity of his person, DEGENERACY, like the viper at *Melita*, fell harmless from his hand.—Appalled by the oppressive contemplation of his greatness, the “cloud-capt” crest of AMBITION was overawed by the majesty of virtue ;—and, maddened to desperation by the invulnerable purity of his life, the snakes of ENVY recoiled upon the head of their mistress, and burrowed to the brain, that supplied their venom.

EXEMPLAR OF HEROES ! in what favored nation, or era, shall the exulting philanthropist record the existence of a character, uniting, like thine, in one bright constellation of talents, every civic and military glory, that blazons in legend, or beams in history ?—Should we search in the archives of classic antiquity, we might find a wise and venerable FABIVS, who, like thee, could “ save a nation by delay ;” *—but never, like thee, could seize victory by enterprize, and outstride fortune by the foresight of philosophy !—We might behold the majestic CINCINNATUS, who, like thee, in the vigor of Roman heroism, could return from the conquest of his country’s enemies, to his humble *Mount Vernon* beyond the *Tyber* ;—but never, like thee, to protect

* PHILINIA.

protect from faction the liberties he had wrested from invasion ! We might trace the great JULIUS, extending the terror of his eagles, through realms, before unshadowed by their pinions ;—we might follow him to the forum, and listen to an eloquence, like thine, when applauding senates instinctly moved at his control ;—but *where*, in the map of *thy* victories, shall we find the banks of a *Rubicon* !

ENCUMBERED with honors the father of his country once more returned to the unambitious abodes of his affection, followed by the tears and blessings of his fellow-citizens !—The glory, which had encircled the scenes of his action, could not be excluded by the solitude of retirement. He had deposed the insignia of command—but his empire was not diminished. He had surrendered the badges of fame—but the gaze of the world did not suspend its veneration. The *name* of WASHINGTON was still a battlement to his country, under whose protection liberty exulted, at whose terrors hostility trembled.

THOUGH remote from the causes of European contest, yet affected by the convulsions it excited, in vain had our nation attempted to maintain with honor an unprotected neutrality. Piracy plundered the ocean ;—Invasion

vasion threatened our shores.—Again, were the eyes of America directed with trembling solicitude to her venerable deliverer ; and, *again* did this MAN WITHOUT EXAMPLE, THIS PATRIOT WITHOUT REPROACH, whose life was his country, whose glory was mankind, resign with alacrity, to the cause he had sworn to defend, the tranquil hope of repose, to which he had devoted the unclouded evening of a life of toils !——The character was perfect ! WASHINGTON now touched “the highest point of all his greatness.” A more than human splendor surrounded him. The ethereal spirit of his virtues towered above the globe they adorned, and seemed to meditate their departure to their native mansion.—Of the frailty of man, nothing now remained but his mortality ; and, having accomplished the embassy of a benevolent Providence—having been the founder of one nation, and the sublime instructor of all—HE TOOK HIS FLIGHT TO HEAVEN ;——not like *Mabomet*, for his memory is immortal without the fiction of a miracle ;——not like *Elijah*, for recording Time has not registered the man, *on whom his mantle should descend* ;——but in humble imitation of that OMNIPOTENT ARCHITECT, who returned from a created universe, to contemplate from his throne the stupendous fabric he had erected !

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THE august form, whose undaunted majesty could arrest the lightening, ere it fell on the bosom of his country, now sleeps in silent ruin, untenanted of its celestial essence. But the incorruptible example of his virtues shall survive, unimpaired by the corrosion of time ; and acquire new vigor and influence, from the crimes of ambition, and the decay of empires. The invaluable valediction, bequeathed to the people, who inherited his affections, is the effort of a mind, whose powers, like those of prophecy, could overleap the tardy progress of human reason, and unfold truth without the labor of investigation. Impressed in indellible characters, this LEGACY OF HIS INTELLIGENCE will descend, unfullied as its purity, to the wonder and instruction of succeeding generations ; and, should the mild philosophy of its maxims be ingrafted into the policy of nations, at no distant period will the departed hero, who now lives only in the spotless splendor of his own great actions, exist in the happiness and dignity of mankind.

THE sighs of cotemporary gratitude have attended the SUBLIME SPIRIT to its paternal abode ; and the prayers of ameliorated posterity will ascend in glowing remembrance of their illustrious benefactor !—The laurels,
that

that now droop, as they shadow his tomb with monumental glory, will be cultivated by the tears of ages ;—and, embalmed in the heart of an admiring world, the temple, erected to his memory, will be more glorious than the *pyramids*, and as eternal as his own imperishable virtues !



The rights of contemporary gratitude have attended the *SUBLINE SPIRIT* to its paternal shores ; and the prayers of unobscured posterity will stand in glowing remembrance of their illustrious benefactor !—The laurels that

